

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 EB-08 AID-05 AF-10 ACDA-12 /112 W  
-----074942 272117Z /66

R 271154Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1231  
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 6650

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PEPR, IN, SY  
SUBJECT: ASSAD VISIT TO INDIA

REF: NEW DELHI 4606

1. SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD'S APRIL 18-22 STATE VISIT TO INDIA MADE HIM THE FIRST ARAB HEAD OF STATE TO VISIT INDIA SINCE THE MARCH 1977 ELECTIONS BROUGHT THE JANATA PARTY TO POWER. OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE ASSAD CAME TO MEET INDIA'S JANATA LEADERS-- SOME OF WHOSE PRO-ISRAEL ANTECEDENTS MIGHT STILL CAUSE CONCERN IN ARAB QUARTERS-- AND TO GIVE SYRIA'S READING OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE. PRESIDENT SADAT'S SIDE WAS PRESENTED LAST MONTH BY EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DR. BUTRUS GHALY (REFTEL).

2. ARAB -ISRAELI DISPUTE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE BULK  
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OF THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR FORMAL BILATERAL TALKS WAS TAKEN BY ASSAD TO PRESENT SYRIA'S VIEW OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS. (HE HAD MET PRIVATELY WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI THE PREVIOUS EVENING.) IN ANY EVENT, NO NEW POSITIONS WERE REVEALED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED AT THE END OF THE VISIT. BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED "GRAVE CONCERN" AT ISRAEL'S "INTRANSIGENCE" IN PERSISTING TO OCCUPY ARAB LAND AND REFUSING TO IMPLEMENT UN RESOLUTIONS.

THEY ALSO AGREED THAT A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE IN THE AREA REQUIRED ISRAEL'S COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY, RESTORATION OF THE "INALIENABLE RIGHTS" OF THE "PALESTINIAN ARAB PEOPLE", AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. THE "REPRESENTATIVE ROLE" OF THE PLO IN ACHIEVING A JUST PEACE WAS RECOGNIZED.

3. LEBANON. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE REFLECTED THE CONCERN OF BOTH PARTIES OVER "THE LATEST BLATANT AGGRESSION BY ISRAEL AGAINST THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON". HOWEVER, AT AN AIRPORT NEWS CONFERENCE APRIL 20, A GROUP OF TYPICALLY AGGRESSIVE INDIAN JOURNALISTS WAS MORE INTERESTED IN SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON. DENYING A SUGGESTION THAT SYRIA'S INTERVENTION IN LEBANON FOLLOWED A MEETING BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS, PRESIDENT ASSAD ASSERTED THAT THE GOVT OF LEBANON HAD REQUESTED SYRIAN INTERVENTION AND THAT THE USSR DID NOT, IN FACT, FAVOR THE COURSE SYRIA CHOSE. HE SAID SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON IS TO OPPOSE ANYONE WHO STARTS FIGHTING THERE. WHEN ANOTHER NEWSMAN SUGGESTED THAT SYRIA HAD NOT COME TO THE RESCUE OF THE LEBANESE DURING THE ISRAELI INVASION, ASSAD ASSERTED THAT SYRIAN TROOPS GAVE COVER TO THE PALESTINIANS, ADDING, "IF YOU MEAN THAT WE SHOULD HAVE RUSHED INTO WAR WITH ISRAEL, THAT WE DID NOT DO". WAR WITH ISRAEL, HE CONTINUED, WOULD BE, AS IN 1973, A UNITED ARAB DECISION.

4. SADT INITIATIVE. IF ASSAD CAME LOOKING FOR INDIAN SUPPORT  
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IN HIS FEUD WITH SADAT, HE DIDNT GET IT. INDIA, AS EXPECTED, PRESERVED HER "NON-ALIGNED" STATUS IN INTER-ARAB DISPUTES. THE COMMUNIQUE MAKES NO REFERENCE, EVEN INDIRECT, TO THE SADAT INITIATIVE, THUS PRESERVING THE GOI'S PUBLIC SILENCE ON THE SUBJECT. AND ALTHOUGH ASSAD STRONGLY CRITICIZED SADAT'S "IRRATIONAL POLICIES" AT HIS APRIL 20 PRESS CONFERENCE, AND INDIRECTLY ON OTHER OCCASIONS, HS REMARKS DID NOT RECEIVE PARTICULARLY COMPREHENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE.

5. TRADE. THE TWO SIDES SIGNED A ONE YEAR, SELF-RENEWING AGREEMENT AIMED AT REDUCING THE IMBALANCE

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REF: NEW DELHI 4606

(CURRENTLY HEAVILY IN INDIA'S FAVOR) IN INDO-SYRIAN TRADE.

IT PROVIDES FOR:

--DOUBLING THE FREQUENCY OF SYRIAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS TO INDIA  
BY ADDING A WEEKLY FLIGHT FROM DAMASCUS TO BOMBAY; A SYRIAN TECH-  
NICAL DELEGATION WILL VISIT INDIA TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS.  
THE ECONOMICS OF AIR INDIA LANDING IN DAMASCUS WILL ALSO BE EXPLORED.

--THE PURCHASE BY INDIA OF 10,000 TONS OF ROCK PHOSPHATES TO  
TEST THEIR SUITABILITY FOR INDIAN INDUSTRY, PARTICULARLY THE FER-  
TILIZER INDUSTRY;

--THE PURCHASE BY INDIA OF 5,000 TONS OF SYRIAN LENTILS;

AND

--A GIFT TO INDIA OF 5,000 TONS OF SYRIAN LENTILS; THE AGREEMENT  
ALSO IDENTIFIED ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR FUTURE INDO-SYRIAN TRADE.  
POSSIBLE EXPORTS FROM INDIA INCLUDE TEA, COFFEE, SPICES, CHEM-  
ICALS, AND ALLIED PRODUCTS, MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS,  
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JUTE AND PLASTIC GOODS, IRON, STEEL AND INDUSTRIAL GOODS.  
SYRIA, IN ITS TURN, COULD EXPORT ROCK PHOSPHATES, AND PHOSPHATIC  
FERTILIZERS, PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, COTTON,  
CEMENT, SPIRITS, AND VEGETABLE OIL SEEDS. SYRIA ALSO EXPRESSED  
AN INTEREST IN INDIAN TEXTILE MACHINERY AND RAILWAY EXPERTISE,  
AND THE TWO SIDES AGREED THAT A SURVEY WOULD SOON BE UNDERTAKEN  
TO SEE IF A RAIL LINE PRESENTLY BEING BUILT BY INDIA IN IRAQ  
MIGHT EXTEND INTO SYRIA. IN ADDITION, ACCORDING TO THE JOINT  
COMMUNIQUE, INDIA WILL PROVIDE UNSPECIFIED PROFESSIONAL AND TECH-  
NICAL EXPERTISE TO SYRIA; IT NOTED THAT A BEGINNING HAS ALREADY

BEEN MADE BY THE PROVISION OF MEDICAL EXPERTS.

6. MISCELLANEOUS. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ALSO:

--EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDO-SYRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND REAFFIRMED THE DETERMINATION OF BOTH SIDES TO GIVE A "FRESH IMPETUS" TO THEIR EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY FURTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION;  
--REFERRED TO THE CONTINUING VALIDITY OF NON-ALIGNMENT, NOTED THE GROWING SUCCESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NAM SINCE THE COLOMBO SUMMIT AND THE NEW DELHI BUREAU MEETING, AND HOPED THAT THE KABUL BUREAU MEETING WOULD CONSOLIDATE THE COOPERATION OF THE NON-ALIGNED IN VARIOUS FIELDS;  
--REAFFIRMED INDO-SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT, PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT;  
--PLEDGED TOTAL SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLES OF ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA, SINGLING OUT THE "HEROIC STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SWAPO", AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON NAMIBIA WOULD PRODUCE A TIME BOUND PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE WHILE PRESERVING NAMIBIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY; AND  
--ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE  
GOHEEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**TAGS:** PEPR, IN, SY, XF, IS, LE, JANATA, (AL-ASSAD, HAFIZ)  
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**Type:** TE  
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